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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Definition of terms for the purpose of these Regulations

1.1.1 OHNS refers to the surgical specialty of Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery.

1.1.2 Applicant means a person who has applied for the Surgical Education and Training (SET) Program in Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS).

1.1.3 Board means the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons Board of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery (Board of OHNS).

1.1.4 Business Days means Monday to Friday excluding Public Holidays.

1.1.5 NZSOHNS or Society means the New Zealand Society of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery.

1.1.6 ASOHNS means the Australian Society of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery.

1.1.7 College or RACS means the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons.

1.1.8 SET Program means the Surgical Education and Training program in OHNS as approved by the Board of OHNS.

1.1.9 Training Hospital means a Hospital where a trainee is allocated for a portion of their training.

1.2 Purpose of these Regulations

These Regulations describe the principles, terms and conditions of the selection process for the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (SET) Program in Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery for the 2016 intake. This document is a public document.

1.3 Administration and Ownership

The College is the principal organisation accredited to conduct surgical education and training in Australia and New Zealand. The Society undertakes the development, delivery and administration of the SET Program as an agent of the College. The Board of OHNS is responsible for communicating with the College and the Society regarding training and education.

1.4 Objective of the SET Program

The overall objective of the SET Program is to produce competent independent specialist surgeons with the experience, knowledge, skills and attributes necessary to provide the communities, health systems and professions they serve with the highest standard of safe, ethical and comprehensive care and leadership.

2 PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING THE SELECTION PROCESS

2.1 The aim of the selection process is to select the highest calibre trainees for the SET Program on the basis of merit through a fair, open and accountable process.

2.2 The selection process will be documented, transparent and objective with applicants having access to eligibility criteria, information on the selection process, general selection criteria and an appeals process.

2.3 The selection process will be subject to ongoing review to ensure its continued validity and objectiveness.

2.4 The SET Program will be widely advertised to eligible applicants.

2.5 The selection process will conform to the requirements agreed by the College Board of Surgical Education and Training (BSET) and will meet the College’s generic eligibility requirements.

2.6 The number of trainees selected in any year will depend on the number of accredited hospital training posts available.
3 ELIGIBILITY FOR APPLICATION TO THE SET PROGRAM IN OHNS

3.1 REGISTRATION AND GENERIC ELIGIBILITY

To apply to the SET Program, applicants must:

3.1.1 Have registered for application with the College by Thursday 5 February, 2015.

3.1.2 Have satisfactorily completed the internship/house surgeon year and be in postgraduate year two (PGY2) or later.

3.1.3 Have current and valid medical registration from the applicable Medical Board or Council in Australia or New Zealand at the time of application. All Australian applicants must have general (unconditional) registration at the time of submitting their registration. New Zealand applicants must have general scope registration or written assurance from the Medical Council of New Zealand that general scope registration will be approved by the start of the training year.

3.1.4 Have permanent residency status or have been granted citizenship at the time of registration for selection in Australia or New Zealand.

3.1.5 Consent to a full criminal history check and agree to submit the relevant documentation on request from the Board to enable a full criminal history check to be undertaken in accordance with the Selection Process.

Police record checks are an integral part of the assessment of applicants for suitability for the SET Program. Applicants must disclose whether they are the subject of any criminal charge still pending before a Court, or whether they have been subject to criminal conviction or findings of guilt before a Court (criminal history). The Board may ask applicants for written consent to seek reports from any or all of the New Zealand Police, Australian Federal Police and the various State and Territory Police Forces (Relevant Police Force):

- Disclosing criminal history information from its own records to the Board; and
- Accessing the records of any other New Zealand, State or Territory police and to obtain any criminal history information which in turn would be disclosed the Board.

Applicants who do not consent to a full criminal history check will be ineligible for selection and will not be considered further in the selection process.

The disclosure or existence of a criminal history or a criminal record does not automatically result in the applicant being unsuitable for selection. Each case will be assessed on its merit.

In considering applications for the SET Program, where a Police Report reveals a criminal record, the Board must take into account:

- The nature of the conviction recorded.
- When the conviction was recorded.
- The relevance of the conviction to the application for the SET Program.
- Any further explanation the applicant may give for the circumstances in which the conviction arose.

Criminal convictions (relevant convictions) which will lead to the applicant being unsuitable for selection to the SET Program include, but are not limited to those:

- Of a sexual nature.
- Relating to drug usage and or trafficking.
- Against liberty, morality and abduction.
- Relating to dishonesty, fraud and deception.

All information obtained through police reports will be treated confidentially.

3.1.6 Have completed the Hand Hygiene module available at www.hha.org.au/home/racs.
3.2 **SPECIALTY SPECIFIC ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

In addition to the generic eligibility requirements, applicants to the SET in OHNS program (New Zealand) must also meet the following specific eligibility requirements:

3.2.1 Minimum of 20 weeks, at Registrar level, in an Otolaryngology Head and Neck Unit completed in the three (3) years prior to application. Locum duties and similar non-consecutive terms will not be included.

   a) The unit must have a supervising Consultant who is a FRACS in OHNS, a member of NZOHNS/ASOHNS and have completed a RACS SAT SET course (or equivalent if outside of Australia or New Zealand).

   b) Supervisor's details must be included in the rotation entry on the application form.

3.2.2 Minimum 20 weeks of surgical experience, in addition to the 20 weeks of OHNS experience in the three (3) years prior to application.

3.2.3 Minimum 8 consecutive weeks in a dedicated Emergency Department in the five (5) years prior to application.

3.2.4 Minimum 8 consecutive weeks in a dedicated Intensive Care Unit or High Dependency Unit in the five (5) years prior to application. All applicants must submit a letter from the Clinical Director of the ICU/HDU outlining the duties performed during that rotation. It is expected that applicants will have had significant ‘Hands on’ Clinical duties in this unit rather than being attached as an observer or performing mainly clerical duties.

3.2.5 If applicant is a current SET trainee in a different specialty, the OHNS term must have been completed in the two (2) years prior to FIRST acceptance to SET.

3.2.6 If applicant is a current SET trainee in a different specialty, the ICU term and the ED term must have been completed in the five (5) years prior to FIRST acceptance to SET.

3.2.7 Documentary evidence must be provided at the time of application for each requirement listed above.

3.3 Applications must be submitted via the College online application system at www.surgeons.org. Applications will close on Thursday 2 April, 2015 12:00pm Australian Daylight Saving time.

3.4 By submitting an application, applicants certify that the information provided is correct and in accordance with these Regulations. If it is discovered that the applicant has provided incorrect or misleading information the applicant may be withdrawn from the selection process and their application will not be considered further. This may occur at any point during the selection process.

3.5 The Board may verify the information provided within the application with external institutions or individuals and by submitting an application the applicant is consenting to the collection, use, disclosure and storage of the information by the Board or its agent.

3.6 Applicants who do not meet generic eligibility requirements as set out in Regulation 3.1 and specific Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery eligibility requirements as set out in Regulation 3.2 will not progress to the next stage of selection and will be advised accordingly.

4 **SELECTION PROCESS OVERVIEW**

4.1 Applicants who satisfy the eligibility requirements will be ranked on the basis of the following selection tools, providing an overall score out of 60;

   4.1.1 Structured Curriculum Vitae out of 35

   4.1.2 Structured Referee Reports out of 25

4.2 Following the process in Regulation 4.1, applicants will be invited for interview according to the process set out in Regulation 7.2
4.3 Applicants who attend the Semi-Structured Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery Panel Interview will be ranked on the basis of the following selection tools, providing an overall score out of 100;

4.3.1 Structured Curriculum Vitae out of 35
4.3.2 Structured Referee Reports out of 25
4.3.3 Semi-Structured Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery Panel Interview out of 40

4.4 Banding

The process of banding is an acknowledgement that there is no justifiable, statistical, or significant difference between scores within the same range. This is due to the fact that an applicant's 'total score' is a collation of information about a variety of attributes (or competencies) from a variety of sources (referees; interviewers). The New Zealand Regional Subcommittee of the Board of Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery may band the scores of applicants in the 2015 selection process to 2% above and below. Other factors will be considered where candidates have no statistical difference in their scores. These factors may include referee reports.

4.5 On completion of the relevant components of the selection process applicants will be classified as either:

4.5.1 Successful - being an applicant who ranked high enough to be made an offer of a position in the training program.
4.5.2 Unsuccessful - being an applicant who does not rank high enough to be made an offer of a position.
4.5.3 Unsuitable - being an applicant who failed to meet an eligibility requirement.

4.6 The entry point into the SET Program for the 2016 intake is SET1. Allocation to available positions anywhere in New Zealand will be according to applicants' final ranking in the selection process.

4.7 All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application.

5 STRUCTURED CURRICULUM VITAE

5.1 The Structured CV (online application form) captures applicants' information on experience, other qualifications, publications, presentations and skills courses.

5.2 Each CV will be scored using a structured scoring system by two scorers, without reference to the opinions of the other. Where any discrepancy occurs in the scores provided by the two scorers the Board Chairman will review discrepancies and provide a consensus score.

5.3 The CV will be scored out of a maximum 100 points. The components scored are:

5.3.1 Surgical Experiences (maximum 46 points)
5.3.2 Skills Courses and Conferences (maximum 16 points)
5.3.3 Qualifications (maximum 18 points)
5.3.4 Research and Academic Achievements (maximum 20 points)

5.4 Surgical Experience (maximum 46 points)

5.4.1 Terms less than 12 continuous weeks duration by the close of applications will not be scored.
5.4.2 Terms longer than 26 weeks will be scored up to the maximum allowable points per rotation.
5.4.3 Only surgical terms will be scored. Surgical terms must be one of the nine specialties of the College.
5.4.4 Private assisting terms will not be scored.

5.4.5 Terms that were not full-time will be scored pro-rata.

5.4.6 Terms commenced after the closing date of applications will not be scored.

5.4.7 Terms will only be considered for scoring if accompanied by documentary evidence in the form of a letter of confirmation from the appointing hospital or Health Service. An employment contract or roster is not adequate documentation and will not be scored.

5.4.8 Scoring

a) A term in Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery is scored 4 points per 12 weeks (max of 16 points).

b) A term in the surgical disciplines of Neurosurgery, Plastics & Reconstructive Surgery and General Surgery is scored 4 points per 12 weeks (max of 8 points each).

c) A term in any other surgical discipline is scored 4 points per 12 weeks (max 4 points each)

5.5 Skills Courses (maximum 16 point)

5.5.1 Courses such as EMST, CLEAR, ASSET, CCrISP, NOTSS and TiPS (or international equivalents) will be scored.

5.5.2 Other courses such as Temporal bone dissection, FESS, Rhinoplasty and Head and Neck Dissection courses will be scored. Each course will be scored 1.0 point each.

5.5.3 Conferences attended such as ASOHNS ASM, NZSOHNS ASM, RACS ASM or equivalent international conferences will be scored.

5.5.4 Conferences will be scored at 0.5 points each.

5.5.5 Certificate of attendance must be provided. Entries without adequate documentation will not be scored.

5.5.6 Courses and conferences must be completed prior to the close of applications.

5.6 Qualifications (maximum 18 points)

5.6.1 Higher degrees awarded by the close of applications will be scored;

a) Higher degrees are defined as a Masters or PhD,

b) A higher degree should be equivalent in syllabus and assessment to one conferred by an Australian or New Zealand University.

5.6.2 A Bachelor of Dental Surgery awarded by the close of applications will be scored.

5.6.3 A successful pass in the RACS Surgical Sciences Examination – generic component will be scored.

5.6.4 A Fellowship of the Royal Australasian College Of Surgeons will be scored.

5.6.5 Scoring does not include:

a) primary medical degrees (MBBS or equivalent)

b) Bachelor Degrees with or without Honours (with the exception of a 5.6.2)

c) Post-graduate or Graduate diplomas or certificates

5.6.6 Qualifications must be complete by the close of applications.

5.6.7 Entries without adequate documentation will not be scored.

5.6.8 Scoring

a) FRACS or equivalent is scored 9 points.
b) A PhD relevant to medicine is scored 6 points.
c) A Masters degree by thesis, relevant to medicine is scored 3 points.
d) A Bachelor of Dental Surgery is scored 3 points.
e) A PhD not relevant to medicine is scored 2 points.
f) RACS Surgical Sciences Exam (generic component only) is scored 1 point.
g) A Masters degree by course work, relevant to medicine is scored 1 point.

5.7 Research and Academic Achievements (maximum 20 points)

5.7.1 Scoring only includes medically-relevant presentations within five (5) years prior to the closing date of application.

5.7.2 In the case of oral presentations, scoring only includes those made personally by the applicant. Documentary evidence must be explicit on this point or the presentation will not be scored.

5.7.3 Scoring only includes presentations made at a scientific meeting or conference subject to abstract selection.

5.7.4 Scientific meetings and conferences are classified by their intended audience, not title.

5.7.5 Entries without adequate documentation will not be scored.

5.7.6 Scoring
   a) Each oral presentation at an international meeting is scored 4 points.
   b) Each oral presentation at a national meeting is scored 2 points.
   c) Each poster presentation is scored 1.0 point.

5.7.7 Scoring only includes publications relevant to medicine in a peer-reviewed publication listed on Medline.

5.7.8 Publications must be published within five (5) years prior to the close of applications.

5.7.9 Publications of a similar nature published will be scored once. The higher scoring entry will take precedence.

5.7.10 Scoring includes case reports, journal articles and book chapters.

5.7.11 Scoring does not include Letters to the Editor.

5.7.12 Entries without proof of publication will not be scored.

5.7.13 Scoring
   a) An article in an international journal where the applicant is the first author is scored 4 points.
   b) An article in a national journal where the applicant is the first author is scored 2 points.
   c) A case report where the applicant is first author or a publication as a sub-author is scored 1 point.

6 STRUCTURED REFEREE REPORTS

6.1 Confidential references are collected by an external agency on behalf of the Board using an online system to obtain information about the clinical aptitude, workplace behaviour and personal attributes of the applicant.

6.2 The applicant must provide contact details including a valid email address for the following:
6.2.1 All supervising surgical consultants who had the greatest period of supervision over the applicant for each surgical term undertaken in the two (2) clinical years prior to the closing date for applications;
   a) Referees must be Surgical Consultants at the time of supervision and must be able to comment on all aspects of the applicant’s training.
   b) cannot be a SET trainee of the College at the time of the rotation,
   c) cannot be an IMG under current assessment of the College at the time of the rotation.
   d) Reports from supervising consultants for research periods will not be sought.

6.2.2 Eight (8) non-surgical staff from within the two (2) clinical years prior to closing date for applications.
   a) Nominated referees must be:
      i. Directors of Emergency Medicine
      ii. Medical Consultants
      iii. Nursing Unit Managers
   b) and include a combination of no more than two (2) non-surgical referees from any one rotation,
   c) and a minimum of three (3) Nursing Unit Managers must be included.

6.3 The Board will select six (6) supervising surgical consultants to be contacted to provide a referee report.

6.3.1 In selecting supervising surgical consultants the Board will endeavour to obtain at least one report from each OHNS term (where applicable).

6.3.2 The remaining referees will be selected from other surgical terms with consideration given to the duration and type of term.

6.3.3 Prior to the distribution of referee reports to the referees, the Board will nominate four (4) primary and two (2) reserve surgical referees from those selected to provide the applicant with the best opportunity to receive an adequate number of valid reports.

6.3.4 To ensure confidentiality of the referee report process, the applicant will not be informed of which referees are primary or reserve.

6.4 The Board will select four (4) non-surgical staff to be contacted as part of the selection process.

6.4.1 In selecting non-surgical staff the Board will endeavour to obtain a variety of reports.

6.4.2 Prior to the distribution of referee reports to the referees, the Board will nominate two (2) primary and two (2) reserve non-surgical referees from those selected to provide the applicant with the best opportunity to receive an adequate number of valid reports.

6.4.3 To ensure confidentiality of the referee report process, the applicant will not be informed of which referees are primary or reserve.

6.5 The applicant must receive four (4) valid reports from surgical consultants and two (2) valid reports from non-surgical staff to be eligible to proceed in the selection process.

6.5.1 On the report the surgical referees will be asked to select one (1) of four (4) options for each of the sixteen (16) assessment areas which they believe best describes the applicant. The assessment areas which will be scored within the reports can be generally categorised as:
   a) Medical expertise
   b) Judgement- clinical decision making
c) Communication
d) Collaboration
e) Management and Leadership
f) Health Advocacy
g) Scholar and teacher
h) Professionalism
i) Technical Expertise

6.5.2 If a surgical referee has provided a response for less than 81.25% (13 out of 16 assessment areas) of the report, the report will be invalid and will not be used as part of the selection process and a reserve's report will be used.

6.5.3 On the report the non-surgical referees will be asked to select one (1) of four (4) options for each of the twelve (12) assessment areas which they believe best describes the applicant. The assessment areas which will be scored within the reports can be generally categorised as:

a) Judgement - clinical decision making
b) Communication
c) Collaboration
d) Management and Leadership
e) Health Advocacy
f) Scholar and teacher
g) Professionalism

6.5.4 If a non-surgical referee has provided a response for less than 83.33% (10 out of 12 assessment areas) of the report, the report will be invalid and will not be used as part of the selection process and a reserve's report will be used.

6.6 If an applicant elects not to provide the details for supervising consultants and non-surgical staff in accordance with these Regulations, or it is discovered that the applicant has provided incorrect or misleading information, the applicant may be withdrawn from the selection process and their application will not be considered further in the selection process.

6.7 Applicants are advised to nominate people who are most likely to be able to give a complete report.

6.8 The referee must have a valid email address and be available to complete the reference during the allocated period. The referee report is an online application and cannot be filled out manually. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure referees are aware of the process at the time of application.

6.9 The names of the referees selected to submit reports will not be released to applicants.

7 SEMI-STRUCTURED OTOLARYNGOLOGY HEAD AND NECK SURGERY PANEL INTERVIEW

7.1 Applicants will be ranked by the combined score of the CV and referee reports according to Regulation 4.1.

7.2 The Board will determine the number of interviews to be conducted based on the approximate number of vacant training positions expected to be available the following year. Interviews will be offered based on a ratio of three (3) applicants to one (1) post (i.e a ratio of 3:1). Applicants will be invited to interview based on ranked order. Applicants with identical scores at the cut off mark will be invited to interview.

7.3 All applicants invited for interview will be given at least ten (10) business days notice of the interview.
7.4 All applicants not invited for interview will be notified at least ten (10) business days prior to the interviews. See Regulation 9.1 for feedback provided at this time.

7.5 All interviews will be held at the Wellington Airport Conference Centre on Saturday 13 June 2015. It is the applicants’ responsibility to make the appropriate travel arrangements and to meet costs incurred in attending the interview. Information about the interview process will be included in the letter inviting applicants to interview.

7.6 Applicants must make themselves available at the scheduled interview time. Applicants who contact the Executive Officer before the interview offers are sent out to request a specific time will be considered. Times will not be changed after offers have gone out. Applicants who do not present for the interview at the scheduled time will not be considered further in the selection process and their applications will be withdrawn.

7.7 The interview will be conducted by three (3) interview panels, each consisting of up to three (3) interviewers. Each interview panel will present two (2) scenarios, each with associated questions.

7.8 The total interview time will be approximately 60 minutes.

7.9 Applicants will be asked the same initial questions. The follow-up probing questions will explore the breadth and depth of each applicant’s experience and insight.

7.10 The interview will seek information on the following attributes:

7.10.1 Ability to perform realistic self-assessment
7.10.2 Ability to contribute effectively as a member of a health care team
7.10.3 Ability to act ethically, responsibly and with honesty
7.10.4 Capacity for caring, concern and sensitivity to the needs of others
7.10.5 The ability to interact effectively with peers, mentors, members of the health care team, patients and their families
7.10.6 Effective spoken communication/Preparation for OHNS training/Overall impression

7.11 Interview Scoring

7.11.1 The Interview will be scored out of a total of 150 and weighted to 40% of the applicants overall score for selection.

7.11.2 The applicant will answer questions relating to six scenarios. There will be two scenarios per panel

7.11.3 There will be three (3) interviewers per panel with each scoring independently, following which a consensus among the three panel members will be reached.

7.11.4 Each scenario will be worth 25 points and consist of
   a) Four attributes with a maximum of 5 points each and,
   b) An overall impression score with a maximum of 5 points

8 FEEDBACK TO SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

8.1 Applicants who are successful in the selection process will be notified in writing of the following:

8.1.1 That they have been successful in the selection process and are being offered a position on the SET Program in New Zealand.

8.1.2 Allocation of Training Hospital will occur by preference.

8.1.3 A Royal Australasian College of Surgeons SET Program Trainee Agreement which must be signed and returned to the Board.
8.1.4 Allocation to hospital posts within Training Regions will occur at the completion of the Selection process and be conducted by the relevant Regional Training Committee of the Board.

8.2 Acceptance of the offer to the SET Program will be conditional on the following:

8.2.1 Applicants must be prepared to be assigned to a training position anywhere in New Zealand throughout their SET Program.

8.2.2 The College is not the employing body; applicants must also satisfy the employment requirements of the institution in which the allocated training position is located.

8.2.3 Agreement to abide by the SET Program and College policies at all times.

8.2.4 Submission of the SET Trainee Agreement prior to the communicated offer expiry due date.

8.3 Applicants who do not satisfy any of the above conditions, or who decline the offer, will automatically forfeit the offer.

9 FEEDBACK TO UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

9.1 Applicants who are unsuccessful in the selection process will be notified in writing of the following:

9.1.1 That they have not met a minimum selection criterion and will not proceed any further in the selection process or;

9.1.2 That they have been deemed suitable for selection but have not ranked high enough to be offered a position.

9.1.3 Scores for each of the selection tools. Information on scores for individual structured referee reports will not be released to applicants.

9.1.4 Information on their position in the wait list should a position become available.

9.1.5 Information on the process available to seek more detailed feedback.

10 SELECTION PROCESS REVIEW

10.1 Applicants may be asked to complete evaluation forms during the selection process.

10.2 Completed evaluations will be analysed for potential improvements to the process.

11 CHANGING SELECTION CRITERIA

11.1 If any candidate has previously met the selection criteria for the 2014 or 2015 applications but has now been deemed ineligible due to the change in criteria, then an application can be made for consideration of that candidate for SET Selection. All applications must be in writing to the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons New Zealand National Office, Level 4, 97 – 99 Courtenay Place, Wellington 6011, New Zealand.